

Health Belief Model-based intervention to improve nutritional behavior among elderly women

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BACKGROUND/OBJECTIVES: Nutrition is a determinant factor of health in elderly people. Independent living in elderly people can be maintained or enhanced by improvement of nutritional behavior. Hence, the present study was conducted to determine the impact of Health Belief Model (HBM)-based intervention on the nutritional behavior of elderly women.

SUBJECTS/METHODS: Cluster-random sampling was used to assess the sample of this clinical trial study. The participants of this study attended a 12-week nutrition education program consisting of two (2) sessions per week. There was also a follow-up for another three (3) months. Smart PLS 3.5 and SPSS 19 were used for structural equation modeling, determination of model fitness, and hypotheses testing.

RESULTS: The findings indicate that intervention had a significant effect on knowledge improvement as well as the behavior of elderly women. The model explained 5 to 70% of the variance in nutritional behavior. In addition, nutritional behavior was positively affected by the HBM constructs comprised of perceived susceptibility, self-efficacy, perceived benefits, and barriers after the intervention program.

CONCLUSION: The results of this study show that HBM-based educational intervention has a significant effect in improving nutritional knowledge and behavior among elderly women.

Nutrition Research and Practice 2016;10(3):352-358; doi:10.4162/nrp.2016.10.3.352; pISSN 1976-1457 eISSN 2005-6168

Keywords: Nutritional behavior, elderly women, Health Belief Model

INTRODUCTION

There has been rapid growth in the elderly population due to reductions in fertility and mortality rates, increased life expectancy, and improvements in the health system [1]. Iran is no exception to this issue [2]. This fast growth in the elderly has created significant challenges, particularly in relation to health [3]. As the proportion of older people increases, their health status becomes a concern [4]. Aging brings about an uneven increase in common illnesses such as degenerative disorders, stroke, cancer, dementia, and related disabilities [2]. As such, most patients admitted to hospital wards are older adults, and two-thirds of them have two or more chronic conditions [5]. Therefore, prevention of chronic conditions in the elderly is very vital to public health [6]. Nutrition is considered as an influential factor on health status of the elderly [7]. Improvement of nutritional behavior can help maintain independent living in the elderly and prevent age-related conditions [8].

Educational intervention has been shown to induce changes in the nutritional behavior of the elderly [9]. Numerous studies have investigated the efficacy of educational models such as

the Health Belief Model (HBM), theory of planned behavior, and social cognitive theory on the nutritional behavior of the aged [10]. The most frequently used model for investigating behavioral changes and preventing diseases in the elderly is the HBM method [11]. Furthermore, the HBM has been shown to be an important instrument for assessing an individual's health perception [12]. The HBM contains different constructs, including perceived susceptibility, perceived severity, perceived benefits, perceived barriers, and perceived self-efficacy, and focuses on the cognitive aspects of an individual's belief such as perception, knowledge, and decisions [13]. The HBM asserts that elderly individuals should understand their elevated risk for potential severe health problems in order to induce a positive response [14]. Perceived barriers and benefits are the most influential variables of the HBM for predicting and explaining health-related behaviors [15]. Those who perceive more benefits than barriers are more probably to take action. In addition, self-efficacy plays a positive role in altering behavior of the elderly [12,14,16].

At the moment, little information is available on the nutritional status of older people. The majority of previous studies were conducted in aging centers or hospitals [17-19],

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Received: June 22, 2015, Revised: February 15, 2016, Accepted: February 16, 2016

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